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# CIE IGCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE 0486

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NOTES ON STORIES FROM "STORIES OF OURSELVES"

# THE SON'S VETO

- **Thomas Hardy:**
  - A Victorian realist, influenced both in his novels and poetry by Romanticism
  - Highly critical of much in Victorian society, though focused more on the declining rural society.
  - Regarded himself primarily as a poet
- **Plotline:**
  - **Exposition:**
    - Exposition is after the event of the story
    - Sophy is physically disabled in a wheel chair
    - Randolph corrects Sophy's English ('Has' not have)
    - Sophy is uneducated. Randolph is embarrassed and very educated - Oxford
  - **Conflict:**
    - Sam proposes to her for the second time.
    - As Twycott has died and she has become lonely she agrees to marry him
    - Awaits son's consent

# THE SON'S VETO

- **Climax:**
  - Sam forbids her from marrying him
  - He makes her swear she won't. She swears she won't!
- **Resolution:**
  - Sophy dies; depressed lonely and had no-one by her side
  - She never had the chance to enjoy herself before she died
- **Effects of the Exposition:**
  - Set after all the events of the story which makes the whole story a flashback
  - At a bandstand where a concert is going on in a private gardens/park in the suburbs of London
  - First paragraph complimenting Sophy's hair (artful atmosphere):
    - 'a wonder and a mystery'
    - 'a rare... example of ingenious art'
    - 'successful fabrication'

# THE SON'S VETO

- Rest of exposition, very sad images about her (we sympathize):
  - 'poor thing' - third person subjective
  - 'only accomplishment she could boast of'
  - 'young invalid lady ... sitting in a wheel chair'
- The whole introduction is a foreshadow revealed by the sad image from language
- **Sophy – Protagonist:**
  - **Poor lady, very vulnerable:** 'poor thing', 'had no maid', 'sitting in a wheel chair'
  - **Uneducated:** 'Has, dear mother - not have'
  - **Looks down on her self:** 'No, I am not a lady... I never shall be'
- **Randolph – Antagonist:**
  - **Arrogant young man:** 'impatient fastidiousness that was almost harsh', 'Surely you know by now!'
  - **Well educated:** 'aristocratic school-knowledge', 'now an undergraduate', 'from Oxford'
  - **Spiteful towards mother:** 'manly anger now', maintained his ascendancy', 'his education... sufficiently ousted his humanity', 'not agree' - even though his mother would be happy with Sam

# THE SON'S VETO

- **Sam - Main Character:**
  - **Hardworking:** 'largest fruiterer's shop in Aldbrickham' - now has the largest fruiterer shop
  - **Well dressed:** 'he wore a neat suit of black'
  - **Romantic and faithful:** waited all these years to proposed to her twice, 'led an idyllic life with her faithful fruiterer', 'I'd keep you as gentle as I ever could'
  - **Very respectful and unresentful:** 'dear Mrs. Twycott' - note this is after Mr. Twycott dies
- **Effectiveness of Ending:**
  - Implies that Sophy dies; unsatisfying as Sophy dies without experiencing any happiness.
  - Makes us hate Randolph as he was so selfish - cared about his social status, didn't care to make his mother happy.
  - Her death makes the read greatly sympathetic towards Sophy more than they already were.
  - As we are annoyed by the fact that Sophy didn't experience any happiness. We not only hate Randolph for not allowing her to get married, we begin to hate the class system as well.

# HER FIRST BALL

- **Katherine Mansfield**
  - Prominent modernist writer of short fiction
  - Born and brought up in colonial New Zealand
- **Plotline:**
  - **Exposition:**
    - Leila is from the country and she goes to her first ball with her cousins
    - She is thrilled and overjoyed with everything
  - **Conflict:**
    - She dances with a 30-year-old fat man
    - Shows her the repetitiveness and eventual predictability of her life; the harsh truth
  - **Climax:**
    - Saddened and depressed by the old man's comments
    - Wants get out of the ballroom

# HER FIRST BALL

- **Resolution:**
  - As she leaves, young man bows before her so she dances with him out of politeness
  - She forgets about what the old man had said and lifts her from her moods
- **Effects of the Exposition:**
  - **Setting:** London, England in a Ballroom
  - Vivid descriptions of setting:
    - **Personification:** 'past waltzing lamp-posts and houses and fences and trees.'
    - **Simile/imagery:** 'road was bright on either side with moving fan-like lights, and ... gay couples seemed to float through the air; little satin shoes chased each other like birds.'
    - **Personification:** 'a burst of tuning from the drill hall, it leaped almost to the ceiling.'
  - Emotions of Leila revealed through third person subjective and objective
    - 'Oh dear, how hard it was to be indifferent like the others!' (nervous)
    - 'softly, gently opening and shutting her fan.'
    - 'But every single thing was so new and exciting' (excited)

# HER FIRST BALL

- 'Oh, how marvellous to have a brother!'
- 'she couldn't have helped crying'
- **Leila – Protagonist:**
  - **Superficial:** 'And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely'
  - **Desperate and scared:** 'Oh dear, how hard it was to be indifferent like the others!'
  - **Isolated:** 'she was an only child'
  - **Does not understand the rules and conventions in the society:** 'Am I meant to have one too?'
  - **Overwhelmed/pleased:** 'How heavenly; how simply heavenly' (repetition)
  - **Depressed by old man:** 'deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore over her head and sobbed'
- **Odious Fat Man – Protagonist:**
  - **Old and fat:** 'Old man – fat with a big bald patch', 'for the last thirty years'
  - **Description:** 'waistcoat was creased, there was a button off his glove, his coat looked as if it was dusty with French chalk' 'looked shabby'
  - **Pessimistic:** 'you'll be sitting up there on the stage, looking on ... your heart will ache, ache'

# HER FIRST BALL

- **Juxtaposition of Young Man and Fat Man**

- The odious old man was 'fat with a big bald patch' while the other was a 'young man with curly hair'
- The dance with the old man was 'more like walking than dancing' while with the young man, 'her feet glided, glided'

- **Effectiveness of Ending**

- Initially, you feel angry at the old man for depressing Leila and you think that is the end
- The last paragraph changes everything because she dances with a young man and she forgets about the comments and the old man himself; 'she didn't even recognise him again'
- Overall, it is effective because you feel satisfied that the protagonist is happy again
- However, the comments of the odious old man make sense to you and you feel that Leila, though it would have made her sad, should have recognized them

NOTES

# THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

- **V. S. Pritchett**

- British writer and critic who is known for his short stories
- Was knighted in 1975 for his services to literature and became Companion of Honour in 1993

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- Harold is on his way to meet and commiserate with his father who has gone bankrupt.
- The liquidators have gone off with everything that is of any value
- Father talks as if that is no great matter as he is now free of the curse of greed for money.

- **Conflict:**

- The father seems strong until, during their conversation, a fly enters the room, with the father overreacting in an attempt to get rid of this simple fly.

- **Climax:**

- The father gets on top of the table in attempt to get rid of the fly however it is too difficult for him to return down – requires son's help.

# THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

- Son offers him money as he feels sorry for him and believes family should support each other
- **Resolution:**
  - At once, passion returns and the father brutally demands to know how money can be raised.
- **Effects of the Exposition:**
  - Set on a November afternoon by underground stations in a shutting down factory
  - Text written in a third-person objective mode, subjective and omniscient
    - Objective: 'It was his father's last day at his factory' & 'He was going to see his father'
    - Omniscient: 'It was a shock to see the name of the firm' & 'His dread being involved ...'
    - Subjective: 'made off down one of the small streets'
  - **Images of Poverty:** 'unemployed men and one or two beggars were dribbling slowly', 'mass of older buildings', 'quarrels, accusations and, at last, bankruptcy', 'sadness of his father's situation'
  - **Foreshadowing:** The son's description of his father's enviousness towards people with money foreshadows his grand addiction to money and desperate need for it.

# THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

- **Harold - Protagonist:**

- **Lecturer:** (so a successful man), loves father but is angry of father's attitude to him
- **Physically unimpressive:** 'round shouldered and shabby '
- **Embarrassed and tries to be polite:** 'bad luck '
- **Nervous:** 'stammers' & 'leans back'
- **Snaps becomes rude:** 'you've thought big until you bust '

- **Father – Antagonist:**

- **Arrogant and demanding,** yet also shows his age and frailty before responding to the son's offer by returning to his prior behavior.
- **Different personalities:**
  - 'his father had two faces... soft warm and innocent daub of innocent sealing wax...shrewd, scared and hard'
  - Idea of two faces existing at the same time suggests the deception of the businessman and supports the nervousness of the son.

# THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

- At first **charming**: 'come in professor', 'Hullo, old chap'
- Once roused the father uses his hands **aggressively**:
  - 'a hammer at an auction'
  - 'end of his leadership... he went away to the back'
- **Insults** physical appearance: 'your hair's is going thin'
- **Effectiveness of Ending**:
  - The ending is very effective in showing us that even when the father has lost all interest in money, even just a small idea of raising it, can arouse such a great addiction and need for money.
  - To the reader, it's not a satisfactory ending as we would like to see the father be free from this money addiction and instead, he's even more addicted.
  - Fly foreshadows his ever ending lust of money expressed in the ending. This is because much how like he desperately tried to kill the fly and wasn't able to - his lust for money is exactly the same.

# THE CUSTODY OF THE PUMPKIN

- **P. G. Wodehouse**

- An English humorist: wrote novels, short stories, plays, poems, song lyrics and pieces of journalism
- Enormous popular success during a career lasting more than 70yrs; writings continue to be read
- Wodehouse's main canvas remained that of a pre- and post-World War I English upper class society, reflecting his birth, education and youthful writing career.

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- Takes place in Blandings Castle on a sunny day and L.E. is looking through his telescope
- Sees his son, Freddie and Aggie together and is not happy
- Due to this, he makes McAllister choose between his job, and cousin Aggie; McAllister resigns

- **Conflict:**

- L.E. regrets losing his head-gardener, since he was the custodian of the pumpkin.
- L.E. assigns Baker for the job, but realizes there is no perfect replacement.
- He travels to London to find him.

# THE CUSTODY OF THE PUMPKIN

- **Climax:**
  - Note from Freddie - he is 'spliced' to Aggie – L.E. is shocked and does not approve
  - L.E. goes to Kensington gardens in search of McAllister.
  - He goes to pick up flowers but was caught and held captive by the constable,
  - He had forgotten his identity card and no one could recognize him.
- **Resolution:**
  - McAllister identifies L.E. He also meets Donaldson, Niagara's father, the owner of a biscuit factory - a billionaire. L.E. is impressed and accepts the marriage.
  - L.E. returns home with McAllister and wins Shrewsbury Contest - PUMPKIN. FIRST PRIZE
- **Effects of Exposition:**
  - Setting: Blandings Castle, England
  - **Vivid descriptions of setting:**
    - Pathetic fallacy: 'morning sunshine' – renewal, freshness
    - Simile/imagery: 'like an amber shower-bath'

# THE CUSTODY OF THE PUMPKIN

- Romantic pastoral image (nature):
  - Listing: 'ivied walls, its rolling parks, its gardens, outhouses, and messuages'
  - Listing: 'green lawns and wide terraces, on noble trees and bright flower-beds'
- **Lord Emsworth:**
  - 'fluffy-minded and amiable old gentleman'
  - **Upper class:** 'ninth Earl of Emsworth'
  - **Loves gardening:** 'main interest of his life was his garden'
  - **Arrogant/bossy:** 'She must go!', 'You must send her away immediately', 'send that girl away today or you can go yourself. I mean it!'
  - **Selfish:** 'No twinge of remorse did he feel'
  - **Materialistic:** 'Frederick! Is anything wrong with the pumpkin?'
  - **Forgetful:** 'His card-case was the thing he always lost second when visiting London - immediately after losing his umbrella.'

# THE CUSTODY OF THE PUMPKIN

- **Agnus McAllister**

- **Description:** ‘sturdy man of medium height, with eyebrows that would have fitted a bigger forehead ... a red and wiry beard’
- **Honest:**
  - ‘Honesty Angus McAllister’s face had in full measure, and also intelligence’
  - ‘She’s payin’ me twa poon’ a week,’
- **Holds dignity:**
  - “accept ma notis,” he said, with formal dignity’
  - ‘I WILL NOT – MCALLISTER’
- **Patriotic:** ‘McAllister had served him faithfully for ten years’

- **Elements of Humour:**

- **Comic incongruity:** Use of the very forceful verb “bellowed,” when verb is followed by the words “his lordship.” Dignified English aristocrats don’t ‘bellow’ - combination of words is funny because of comic incongruity of verb and noun.

# THE CUSTODY OF THE PUMPKIN

- **Comic exaggeration:** description of Frederik as the “villain of the piece” is also amusing. Frederick is not evil or dangerous or malign.
- **Comic contrast:** between angry Emsworth and the love-smitten Freddie, who is still ‘sunk in a roseate trance’ (hyperbolic)
- **Comic verb:** “gambolled,” implies a light-heartedness contrasting to mood of Lord Emsworth.
- **Comic slang:** ‘Hullo, guv’nor’, son of an English aristocrat speaks to his father as if he were a cockney
- **Comic simile:** Emsworth described as looking “like the man who smothered the young princes in the Tower.” This phrase is humorous for several reasons: exaggerated, vivid and highly inventive.

NOTES

# THE DESTRUCTORS

- **Graham Greene**

- Popular novelist and writer of short stories in his own lifetime.
- His works explore the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world
- Noted for his ability to combine serious literary acclaim with widespread popularity.

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- Set post WW2 in London
- Group of boys create gang called “Wormsley Common Gang” and they want to break the laws.
- Blackie is first leader of the gang but then Trevor comes and takes the power and leadership.

- **Conflict:**

- T. formulates a plan to destroy Mr Thomas’s 200 year old home
- Plans to systematically destroy house from inside & out; make sure nothing can be used again
- He says that he will destroy it simple because it is beautiful.

# THE DESTRUCTORS

- **Climax:**
  - Mr Thomas returns home early and house has not been destructed fully
  - Boys begin not to trust leadership of T. – Summers calls him Trevor
- **Conflict:**
  - Mr Thomas is locked away in his own outhouse
  - Boys continue destroying house
  - Driver came to take out lorry and pulled down the house
  - House was completely destroyed
- **Effects of Exposition:**
  - Set in London where Hitler destroyed millions of homes – the Blitz
  - Directly connects story to Hitler; both link to senseless destruction
  - Paragraph 1 and 2 in objective narrator mode and sometimes omniscient
    - Objective: ‘he never...’, ‘when he said...’
    - Omniscient: ‘What but an old quality of danger...’

# THE DESTRUCTORS

- Negative and grey images – destruction by the bombings:
  - ‘suffered from the blast of the bomb’
  - ‘side walls were supported on wooden struts’ (sibilance)
  - ‘house stuck up like a jagged tooth’ (predatory image – jagged)
  - ‘crippled house’ (personification)
- Foreshadowing: Story describes destruction of the city therefore foreshadowing that Mr Thomas’s house will be destroyed too
- **T. (Trevor) – Protagonist:**
  - Comes from an upper/middle-class society
    - Father was ‘a former architect and present clerk’
    - Name = Trevor (middle class)
  - Has no emotions
    - Wants to destroy the house and doesn’t feel bad about doing so; ‘of course I don’t hate him’
    - ‘All this hate and love... it’s soft, it’s hooley... there’s only things’

NOTES

# THE DESTRUCTORS

- Leader - organized and planned:
  - 'gang had gathered round T.'
  - 'stay here and break the bath and the washbasin', 'smash all the china and glass and bottles'
- **Blackie:**
  - Loses leadership
    - 'end of his leadership... he went away to the back'
    - Sad: 'thought of going home, of never returning'
    - Jealous: 'all were punctual except Blackie'
  - Wants gang to be famous: 'fame of the Wormsley Common car-park gang'
  - Not well-organized: 'different from the old happy-go-lucky ways under his leadership'
- **Mr Thomas:**
  - Old man (sad): nickname = 'old misery'
  - 'once been a builder and decorator'
  - 'Old Misery was too mean to spend money on the property'

# THE DESTRUCTORS

- Generous: 'handed over three packets of Smarties'
- Has a beautiful house: 'It's a beautiful house', 'two hundred years old'
- Naïve: Allowed T. into house and showed it to him
- **Effectiveness of Ending:**
  - Reader infuriated that the driver found his unintentional action (pulling of the structural beam which caused the house to fall down) "funny"
  - Expected to know more as he was older than gang members so should have been sympathetic to Mr Thomas.
  - Ending is effective because it reveals the dominant effects of WW2 - people can become used to anything and be emotionless to others

NOTES

# A HORSE AND TWO GOATS

- **R. K. Narayan**
  - Leading figure in Indian/English Literature
  - Was friends with Graham Greene ('The Destructors')
  - Stories usually centered around everyday life in India
- **Plotline:**
  - **Exposition:**
    - It takes place in a small village in India called Kritam
    - Muni, protagonist, owned 40 sheep and goats when young but now he is poor, 2 goats only
  - **Conflict:**
    - His wife is angry and tells him to sell his 2 goats, but no one wants to buy them
    - He still goes to the market place to try to sell them
    - He ties goats to a statue of a horse and a foreign American arrives as his car broke down.
    - He wants to buy statue but Muni thinks he wants to buy his goats, due to the language barrier

# A HORSE AND TWO GOATS

- **Climax:**
  - Miscommunication between the two occurs due to language barrier; Muni thinks he is paid 1000 rupees for the goats and American thinks he bought the statue
  - Muni's wife thinks he stole the money and the goats returning home is the evidence
- **Resolution:**
  - The American is still waiting for Muni to come back and help load statue into his car
  - Wife says she is going to go stay with her parents because she thinks the police is going to be after Muni
- **Ridiculous/Comedy:**
  - They cannot understand what one another are saying – 'the mutual mystification was complete', '
  - Muni was talking about 'the end of the world' and 'avatars'
  - The American was discussing about his business – 'My trade is coffee'

# A HORSE AND TWO GOATS

- **Muni – Protagonist:**

- Cannot speak English ('yes no') however is street smart and has extensive knowledge on Hinduism
- He is very poor: 'I am the poorest fellow in our caste' and 'everyone else... had more money than he'
- May have been involved in illegal activities:
  - 'Beware of khaki': 'khaki': metaphor for police which shows paranoia and suggests a criminality
  - 'he smoked bhang': a kind of narcotic that he used to smoke
- Character is a Ying and Yang:
  - Positive = speaking of God and religion and explaining the apocalypse
  - Negative = smokes, lies and steals goods

- **The American – Supporting character:**

- Polite and respectful:
  - 'Do you smoke?' – trying to be hospitable, inquisitive and "breaking the ice"; can be argued that he is trying to assess the culture
  - 'Marvellous' – speaking positively of Muni and his idea; can be argued that he was flattering

# A HORSE AND TWO GOATS

- Modest
  - ‘a modest businessman’ – he self-describes himself as this – can be argued either ways
  - ‘I am not a millionaire’ – he assumes Muni thinks and doesn’t want to make him believe that
- **Effectiveness of Ending:**
  - Reader is left curious what happened to Muni after his wife leaves
  - Curious about the American who is still waiting for Muni to get back and help him with the statue
  - But in a way after the deal is sealed there is a major thing to consider: juxtaposition of characters
    - Muni: poor, rural, uneducated, Hindu, brown, a social outcast
    - American: wealthy, urban, educated, probably Christian, white, and socially outward
  - The story plot is unsatisfying but the objective is met: to see the immense difference in 2 cultures

NOTES

# THE RAIN HORSE

- **Ted Hughes**

- Known better as a poet than a writer
- Still a good writer, one of the best
- Was British Poet Laureate from '84 till death '98

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- It takes place on a field – 'utterly deserted, shallow, bare fields, black and sodden as the bed of an ancient lake' – abandoned, ominous, old
- The 'young man' is coming back after 12 years, wanted to see how it changed

- **Conflict:**

- Begins to rain and he cannot find adequate shelter from it - dark gloomy atmosphere
- Thought he was being paranoid about horse, just an animal – 'this was absurd'
- The horse thundered through the place where the man was sitting – 'the ground shook' but the man still thought it was just a coincidence

# THE RAIN HORSE

- **Climax:**
  - The horse is definitely up to no good against the man – ‘it was definitely after him’
  - They meet each other at an old school standoff – the guy with his stones versus the horse
  - Tension reaches its maximum
- **Resolution:**
  - The man defeats his foe – ‘the horse swirled away and went careering down’
  - He walks off again looking for the shed he came to find in the first place – he no longer cares whether the horse will come at him or not (it is not dead)
  - He wonders if he has lost his mind – ‘as if some important part had been cut out of his brain’
- **Poetic/Figurative Language:**
  - **Personification:** ‘the wood hummed’, ‘land no longer recognized him’ emphasis on lonesome
  - **Hyperbole:** ‘the rain was a cold weight’ just drops of water; used to emphasis gloomy feeling
  - **Colours:** ‘black horse’ give a sense of depression; colour usually used in poetry

# THE RAIN HORSE

- **Pathetic Fallacy:** 'sky had grown much darker' common in stories but also in poems so counts to underlying essence of poetry
- **Simile:** 'Black as iron' suggesting the strength as iron is a strong, durable metal
- **Young Man – Protagonist**
  - Comes from upper class: 'grey suit', 'coat-collar'
  - Is cold-hearted: 'felt nothing but the dullness of feeling nothing', 'looked back at it coldly'
  - Then reveals to be more emotional: 'He felt hidden and safe', 'forget himself'
- **The Horse – Antagonist:**
  - Possibly sick: 'thin, black horse'
  - Mad: 'red-veined eyeball', 'watching him intently', 'this horse was nothing like that' (other horses), 'queer states'
  - Powerful: 'crash of a heavy body', 'tall as a statue'
  - Swift and almost supernatural: 'The horse disappeared', 'he was running alone'

# THE RAIN HORSE

- **Effectiveness of Ending:**

- Reader is left confused by the ending
- Wonders what the protagonist meant by stating that 'some important part had been cut out of his brain'
- Unsatisfying ending
- He reached his goal, to get to the shed, but it feels like there should be something more afterwards
- What happens to the guy? What happens to the horse? Why was he really there?

NOTES

# MY GREATEST AMBITION

- **Morris Lurie**

- His work is often focused around comic mishaps
- Best known for his great, funny short stories
- Incidentally many of his stories have been published in prestigious publications

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- A kid, the protagonist, has a great ambition to become a comic strip artist
- It is set in Melbourne, Australia
- He tells his friend Michael Lazarus, who tells him to go to publication and so he sends it

- **Conflict:**

- Father always asks whether they sent money but when the letter comes from 'Boy Magazine' it is a letter for an appointment, not a cheque, so father disapproves
- He still goes ahead on his own to make an appointment
- He would have to miss school, mother disapproves however the magazine reschedules

# MY GREATEST AMBITION

- **Climax:**

- Lurie sets out to Boy Magazine offices, all by himself
- Meets Mr Randell; awkward = kid in an adult world + several awkward silences
- Due to this, Lurie taken to see printing press but doesn't like it and can't wait to leave
- He ends up getting paid 15 pounds for the comic strip
- Draws up 2<sup>nd</sup> comic strip however it is rejected because Boy Magazine went out of business

- **Resolution:**

- Lurie moves on from wanting to be a comic-strip artist, because it was risky and unsure
- He then wanted to become a painter (also risky and unsure) but can't connect with it
- He then reflects on himself that he became an adult

- **Relationship between Father and Son:**

- Father always seems to discourage son – 'I don't see a cheque', 'that means they don't want it', 'we'd know in a few days if it was any good', 'Ha, listen, listen' mocking
- Father is superficial, more when regarding his son – 'a prince' could be a compliment or mockery

# MY GREATEST AMBITION

- But the story may be biased because it is from adult Lurie's point of view
- The father could be protecting the son from major disappointment
- Lurie doesn't seem like his father: 'My father... what's the point of going over all that?', 'pointless conversation', 'wasn't going to have my father listening to every word'
- **Ridiculous/Comedy:** There is an underlying essence of comedy throughout the story
  - Absurd: 'folded it four times ... put it in her purse ... purse in her bag ... bag in her wardrobe'
  - Awkward: 'no one seemed to know what to do', 'another ... silence', 'just ... smiled at everyone'
  - Childish: 'licked my ice cream' - absurd because appears to be acting adultlike
- **Lurie – Protagonist:**
  - **A dreamer:** 'I had become... a dreamer'
  - **Changes mind quickly:** 'I decided no', 'at three I did', 'at four it was no again'
  - **Young:** 'I was thirteen', 'standing on tiptoe talking into a public phone'
  - **Impatient and anxious:** 'I kept jumping up from my seat', 'see if we were getting near a station', 'What if I went too far?', 'What was the time?', 'I was in a fine state of nerves'

# MY GREATEST AMBITION

- **Antagonistic – Father and Mother:**

- Father: **materialistic & mocking:** ‘I don’t see a cheque’, ‘They sent you the money yet?’
- Mother: **gossiping & bragging:** She told everyone in our street about it’, ‘She phoned uncles, aunts, sisters, brothers’, ‘didn’t say much to me... explaining to all her friends what a clever son she had’

- **Effectiveness of ending:**

- Ending is satisfying because story is resolved – boy has grown up and moved on to adulthood
- Ironic that he drops being a comic-strip artist for painting - both risky and unsure occupations
- Lurie slightly disappointed in himself because he had become ‘like everyone else, a dreamer’
- Moral: pursue your dreams, sure, but only at the right time, not too late and definitely not too soon

NOTES

# SANDPIPER

- **Ahdaf Soueif:**

- An Egyptian novelist and political and cultural commentator
- She studied for a PhD in linguistics at the University of Lancaster
- Born in Cairo, where she lives, and educated in Egypt and England

- **Plotline:**

- **Exposition:**

- The narrator who is a European is married to an Egyptian
- The initial years of marriage were blissfully happy

- **Conflict:**

- Strain of carrying on a cross cultural relationship affects marriage - she is unhappy
- Summer in Alexandria, the rest of the year in the northern land (Europe)

- **Climax:**

- Narrator cannot break away from marriage as her daughter is still young; Lucy is stopping her
- Narrator has no choice. She must stay until his daughter becomes older

# SANDPIPER

- **Resolution:**
  - No clear resolution – starts describing the sea and the beach again
  - Awaiting for her daughter to grow and become independent so she can leave.
- **Effects of Exposition:**
  - Set on a Beach in Alexandria where the narrator is describing it; everything in the first person
  - Exposition basically expressing how she's an **outsider and how her love falling apart:**
    - 'I gave birth to his child' - not her child?
    - 'To love this new him' - task?
    - 'I was trying to work out my co-ordinates' - lost?
    - 'My husband translated all this for me' - even though she's been living there for 6yrs
  - Doesn't want to be a part of life in Alexandria - wants to be very **passive**: 'I did not want one grain of sand... to change its course because of me'
  - **Foreshowing:** The descriptions of the beach, sea and her passive attitude foreshadows that she doesn't belong in Alexandria and that there is something trapping her - stopping her from leaving.

# SANDPIPER

- **Narrator - Protagonist**

- Doesn't say her name
- Lives in a foreign country which gives her a lonely feeling: 'trying to work out co-ordinates'
- Trying to be independent: 'I tried, at first, at least to help'
- Regret: 'I should have left'

- **Husband** (He is not the antagonist, his country is):

- From Egyptian origin: speaks native language and translates for his wife
- He too started to love her less
  - 'My foreignness, which had been so charming, began to irritate him'
  - 'sensed that he was pulling away from me'

- **Lucy – their daughter:**

- Was born and raised in foreign land (Egypt) – narrator pulls away from her: 'his daughter'
- Lucy is reason the narrator remains in this relationship in a foreign country; loves her so that she is willing to sacrifice her happiness for her: 'my treasure, my trap'

# SANDPIPER

- **Effectiveness of Ending:**

- Enigmatic: doesn't really makes sense to the reader as there isn't a direct and vivid resolution
- Once again she is describing the sea and the beach just like at the start of the story
- She finally reveals to the reader that it was because of Lucy that she was willing to be unhappy
- Ending is effective at displaying her relationship with her husband due to mix of rhetorical questions found at the end

**NOTES**

# AT HIRUHARAMA

- **Penelope Fitzgerald:**
  - Was a Booker Prize–winning English novelist, poet, essayist and biographer.
  - Belonged to illustrious Knox family with father and brothers intellectuals of their time.
  - She was a late entrant to writing, publishing her first book when she was 58
- **Plotline:**
  - **Exposition:**
    - Tanner arrives in New Zealand hoping to be an apprentice but turns out to be a servant.
    - He puts faith in future and marries Kitty who is similarly placed and moves to Hiruharama which is remote.
  - **Conflict:**
    - Kitty falls pregnant and Mr Tanner wants to be prepared
    - Contacts the doctor for medicine and a mean to contact him when Kitty is in labour
  - **Climax:**
    - Kitty is giving birth and doctor is not there

# AT HIRUHARAMA

- Brinkman arrives and wants to eat
- Tanner mistakenly throws away second child (there were twins) thinking it waste from birth
- **Resolution:**
  - The doctor arrives and saves the baby
  - The baby turns out to be a successful lawyer
  - The couple go on to have 9 children in total
- **Conflicts:**
  - **Tanner & himself:** dilemma over trivial matters; stay with Kitty giving her company or do the chores?
  - **Tanner/Kitty VS Brinkman:** Brinkman arrives when Kitty is in labour and expects dinner. It is a minor conflict but they do not argue and Tanner and Kitty just ignore his presence
  - **Tanner/Kitty VS limited help:** they live far away from town and doctor and have no neighbours except Brinkman. Also relatively poor decreasing the ease of birth. Racing pigeons give them one advantage over circumstances

# AT HIRUHARAMA

- **Tanner - Protagonist**

- **Worried and anxious:** 'turned over in his head', 'don't let that worry you', 'he'd been worried'
- **Loving and caring:** 'ought to have taken you with me', 'My darling old sister', 'I can do anything about the house'
- **Determined to help wife:** 'drove back into town once more', 'mailing the letter', 'bought soap, thread, needles, canned fish, tea and sugar'

- **Brinkman – Antagonist**

- **Selfish and self-centered:** 'I think of myself as one of the perpetually welcome', 'my half-yearly dinner with you', 'She won't be cooking dinner this evening, then?'
- **Calm and cold:** 'all the time Brinkman continued to sit there by the table and smoke his pipe', 'sat there, as solid as is chair'
- **Lonely and isolated:** 'no one except a man called Brinkman', 'that's what he complains about' (complains about not having a wife)

# AT HIRUHARAMA

- **Effectiveness of Ending:**

- It is both satisfying and unsatisfying ending
- Satisfying because the question of family is cleared up completely
  - Tanner married Kitty
  - Had nine children plus the initial 2 – total 11
  - One of the nine were Mr Tanner's (the narrator) father
- Unsatisfying because we do not know why Mr Tanner needed a lawyer and why a 'trustworthy' one
- Reader still curious to know what happened to Mr Tanner

**NOTES**